

# Compare and Analyze the Cultures with Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory Bangladesh and South Korean Perspective

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## ABSTRACT

This paper aims to compare and analyze the national cultures of Bangladesh and South Korea through the lenses of Hofstede's cultural dimensions model. The study uses both primary and secondary data sources to examine the cultural differences and similarities in the two countries. The primary data sources include surveys and interviews conducted with individuals from both countries, while the secondary sources include academic articles, books, and reports on the subject. The paper finds that there are significant differences in the two cultures in terms of power distance, individualism, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, and long-term orientation. These differences can be attributed to various factors such as history, religion, language, education, and political systems. The study concludes that understanding the cultural differences between Bangladesh and South Korea is crucial for effective communication, collaboration, and business relations between the two countries.

**KEYWORDS:** *culture, nationality, diversity, harmony, development*

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## Overview of Bangladesh

Bangladesh is located in the North Eastern part of South Asia. Some distance from the northern border of Bangladesh is the Himalayan Mountains and the Bay of Bengal to the south. Bangladesh shares its border with India's West Bengal to the west, Tripura to the east, Mizoram state and the hilly areas of Myanmar as well. Bangladesh is mainly a flat land surrounded by numerous rivers. The important rivers of the country are - Padma, Brahmaputra, Surma, Kushiara, Meghna and Karnaphuli. The natural beauty and food habits of each region are different. Bangladesh is the land of the Royal Bengal Tiger which lives in the Sundarbans. There are also red clay temples here. Notable tourist areas in the country include: Srimangal, which has miles of tea plantations. Archaeological sites include – Mainamati, Mahasthangarh and Paharpur. Rangamat, Kaptai and Cox's Bazar are famous for scenic views.

Sundarbans is home to wild animals and world famous mangrove forests.<sup>1</sup>

## Bangladesh Fast Facts

Official Name: People's Republic of Bangladesh

Weekends: Friday and Saturday. Some offices are open on Saturdays.

International dialing code: +880

International Time Zone: BST (GMT +6 hours)

## Population

Population: 160 million (Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics)

Male: 80 million

Women: 80 million

Education Rate: 63.6%

## Language

Bengali (National Language) - 95% of the population

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.bangladesh.gov.bd/site/page/812d94a8-0376-4579-a8f1-a1f66fa5df5d/> (last accessed on 07 October 2022)

Other languages - 5%  
English is commonly used.

## Religion



**The national monument of Bangladesh**

Muslims - 86.6%,  
Hindus - 12.1%  
Buddhist - 0.6%  
Christians - 0.4% and  
Others - 0.3%.

## Overview of Bangladeshi Culture

The culture of Bangladesh refers to the interaction of literature, music, dance, food, clothing, festivals, etc. of the people of Bangladesh, a South Asian country. The Bengalis of Bangladesh have hundreds of years of history and tradition. The Bengali culture of Bangladesh shines in pride due to its unique characteristics. Bangladesh is one of the countries with rich culture in the world.

The culture of Bangladesh is deeply intertwined with the culture of the Bengal region. Basically Bengali culture refers to the culture of Bangladesh. It has evolved over the centuries and incorporates the cultural diversity of various social groups in Bangladesh. The Bengali Renaissance of the early eighteenth century, famous Bengali writers, saints, authors, scientists, researchers, thinkers, music composers, painters, filmmakers played an important role in the development of Bengali culture. The Bengal Renaissance contained the seeds of a nascent political Indian nationalism that was in many ways a forerunner of modern Indian artistic and cultural expression.

M. According to Nazrul Islam Tamiz, a human rights activist and chairman of the National Human Rights Society (NHRS), human rights are the most important part of Bengali culture, and it plays an important role in the development of Bengali culture.<sup>2</sup>

Bangladesh's composite culture has been influenced by Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Christianity for centuries. It manifests in various forms including music, dance, drama; Art craft; folklore folklore;

<sup>2</sup><https://www.hurights.or.jp/archives/focus/section2/1999/12/a-national-human-rights-commission-for-bangladesh.html> (last accessed on 07 October 2022)

language literature; philosophy religion; celebration of festivals; as well as culinary traditions in a distinct cuisine.

## Cultural diversity for harmony and development of Bangladesh

Bangladesh is beautiful and diverse. There are Padma-Meghna-Yamuna-Surma rivers, and Sangu-Maini-Someswari-Seemsang-Chengi rivers. And since time immemorial there have been people of various races including Garo, Hajong, Santal, Khasia, Manipuri, Chakma, Marma, Tripura, Munda, Koch, Lusai. Here in March 2019, the Ministry of Culture has recognized 50 indigenous ethnic groups.<sup>3</sup> The International Mother Language Institute found in a survey, there are 41 languages in the country. Here, apart from Bengali and Urdu, 39 languages are the languages of minority ethnic groups. This government institution says that at least 14 of these languages are endangered.

Bangladesh is a country of many races, many languages and many cultures - our country is more beautiful if we think in this way. The words beauty and unity in diversity apply to us. How many races, how many languages, how many colors, how many cultures we have one world.

The presence of human dignity is important for preserving and celebrating cultural diversity. Achieving cultural rights creates the environment to protect cultural diversity. Again, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, pluralism of languages, equal rights in arts, technology and science education play a role in preserving cultural diversity. When cultural diversity is respected in society, it facilitates productive dialogue and encourages creativity. Not only that, cultural diversity contributes significantly to the development of social bonds, mutual cooperation, communication, development and peace building, relations between government, non-governmental organizations and civil society.

Therefore it is important to embrace and celebrate difference and diversity as strengths. Diversity is not a threat, but beauty should be spread among all. We have to build a culture of respect for people, people and nations. Poet Shamsur Rahman wrote in the poem 'Katha Chila', 'I will show everyone the eternal sunrise.' No one should be deprived and oppressed because of different religion, different language and culture. We dream of a beautiful inclusive Bangladesh, where people of all religions and cultures participated and gave their lives during the liberation war.

<sup>3</sup><https://moca.gov.bd/site/page/47aed680-99e9-4f69-8c3b-2c580b9be503> (last accessed on 07 October 2022)

## Pohela Boishakh: The Bengali New Year

Pahela Baishakh or Paila Baishakh (1st day of Baishakh, the first month of Bengali calendar) is the first day of Bangabd, the Bengali New Year. The day is the traditional New Year's Day of all Bengali people. The day is celebrated with special festivities as New Year in Bangladesh and West Bengal, India. Bengalis living in Tripura also participate in this festival. Pahela Boishakh is celebrated as a national festival in Bangladesh.<sup>4</sup> As such it is considered as a universal folk festival of Bengalis.

According to the Gregorian calendar, this festival is celebrated on April 14 every year in Bangladesh. This day is fixed according to the modern Bengali calendar prescribed by Bangla Academy. In West Bengal, Pahela Baisakh is celebrated on 15th April according to the Chandrasaur Bengali calendar.<sup>5</sup> The day is also observed as a public holiday in Bangladesh and West Bengal. Businessmen of various levels take the day as an opportunity to start a new business.<sup>6</sup>

This festival is celebrated with various activities such as processions, fairs, pantabhat eating, Halkhata opening etc. The traditional Bengali New Year greeting is "Shuv Navbarsh". Mars procession is organized in Bangladesh during New Year. In 2016, UNESCO declared the festival procession organized by Dhaka University as "Invaluable Cultural Heritage of Humanity".<sup>7</sup>



**People of Bangladesh are celebrating the Pohela Baishak**

## Mars Procession (Mangal Sobhayatra)

A procession is organized to bid farewell to the old year and welcome the Bengali New Year.<sup>8</sup> The main procession of the Mangal Shobhayatra leaves from the Fine Arts Institute of Dhaka University. Apart from this, processions are taken out to welcome the New Year in different districts of the country.<sup>9</sup> Many aspects of Bengali culture are highlighted in the Mangal procession. It is depicted in images, masks and various symbols. Every year this Mars procession has a different theme. That essence is protest and betrayal. Destruction of evil is desired there, called to the true and beautiful.<sup>10</sup>

The procession is colorful. Various folk elements of contemporary Bengal are brought out in this procession. Various masks, idols, tapa dolls, carved birds, portraits of various animals are made by hand on the occasion of the procession. The elements needed to decorate this procession are taken from the various types of folk art toys of the country from the beginning. Apart from this, horses, carved fans, flowers, butterflies, people, nature are taking place in the procession.<sup>11</sup>

Another special aspect of the Mangal Sobhayatra is that it does not take the help of any commercial organization to organize it.<sup>12</sup> Many art teachers, students or painters earn money by selling their

<sup>4</sup><https://thesciencesurvey.com/spotlight/2022/04/21/pohela-boishakh-the-bengali-new-year/> (last accessed on 07 October 2022)

<sup>5</sup><https://bn.banglapedia.org/index.php/> (last accessed on 07 October 2022)

<sup>6</sup><https://archive.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/nation/2019/04/14/pohela-boishakh-being-celebrated> (last accessed on 07 October 2022)

<sup>7</sup><https://steemit.com/history/@habiburr15/the-first-of-baishakh> (last accessed on 07 October 2022)

<sup>8</sup> <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/mangal-shobhajatra-on-pahela-baishakh-01091> (last accessed on 07 October 2022)

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.thedailystar.net/arts-entertainment/event/mangal-shobhajatra-intangible-cultural-heritage-humanity-1561927> (last accessed on 07 October 2022)

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.dhakatribune.com/dhaka/2022/04/03/mangal-shobhajatra-to-be-brought-out-in-festive-mood-in-2022> (last accessed on 07 October 2022)

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.tbsnews.net/bangladesh/mangal-shobhajatra-after-two-years-hiatus-402974> (last accessed on 07 October 2022)

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.daily-sun.com/post/613914/DU-to-celebrate-Bengali-New-year-with-Mangal-Shobhajatra-after-2-years> (last accessed on 07 October 2022)

paintings, which is the main source of organizing Mangal Shobhayatra.<sup>13</sup> Earlier masks or various materials used in the procession were auctioned. The money that was received from there was later spent on processions. Now the art teachers-students start this work a month before. The sale of artworks started a month ago.<sup>14</sup>



**Mars Procession (Mangal Sobhayatra)**

### Overview of the South Korean Culture

South Korean culture is derived from ancient culture. The division of Korea in 1948 resulted in the cultural differences between North and South Korea.<sup>15</sup> Today, South Korean culture is cutting-edge. Economic and social development has led to changes in the standard of living in clothing, cuisine, housing, etc., and thus the modern culture of South Korea has been created. Korean culture has become popular in Asia and the world, so it is called the Korean wave.

The current political division of North and South Korea has removed modern Korean culture. Yet both states have a history of over five thousand years and one of the oldest histories of the world. Human beings began to live on the Korean peninsula in ancient times. South Korean culture is derived from ancient culture. The division of Korea in 1948 resulted in the cultural differences between North and South Korea. Today, South Korean culture is cutting-edge. Economic and social development has led to changes in the standard of living in clothing, cuisine, housing, etc., and thus the modern culture of South Korea has been created. Korean culture has become popular in Asia and the world, so it is called the Korean wave.<sup>16</sup>



### South Korean Food Culture and History

From the early eight thousand BC, when we learn about the existence of potters from the evolution of kingdoms and states and cities through nomadic barbarians and isolated tribal villages to the present civilization, Korea has a colorful history that spans thousands.

In the Korean foreland, the earliest humans known to exist were hunter-gatherers who were probably small family groups and semi-nomadic as they followed food supplies.<sup>17</sup> The growing population led to small groups becoming tribes and they began to settle in particular parts of the country, especially around food sources. These settled tribes then formed villages and focused on agriculture and domesticated animals.<sup>18</sup>

### Seoul Lanten festival

The Seoul Lantern Festival is an annual festival in South Korea. This festival is held every year in November in Seoul, South Korea.<sup>19</sup> Hundreds of brightly colored lanterns are gathered at the entertainment center Cheonggicheng. Thousands of people from all over the country enjoy this festival every year.<sup>20</sup>

The main attraction of this winter festival is the lantern. The lanterns of different colors and different designs capture the attention of everyone present. There is about 1.2 km from Cheonggi Plaza to Supio Bridge.<sup>21</sup> This colorful festival runs throughout the region.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.bssnews.net/news/55808> (last accessed on 07 October 2022)

<sup>14</sup> <https://thesciencesurvey.com/tag/mangal-shobhajatra/> (last accessed on 07 October 2022)

<sup>15</sup> <https://english.visitkorea.or.kr/enu/index.kto> (last accessed on 07 October 2022)

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.korea.net/AboutKorea/Culture-and-the-Arts> (last accessed on 07 October 2022)

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.korea.net/AboutKorea/Korean-Life/Food> (last accessed on 07 October 2022)

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.korea.net/AboutKorea/Korean-Life/Food> (last accessed on 07 October 2022)

<sup>19</sup> <https://english.visitseoul.net/seoullantern> (last accessed on 07 October 2022)

<sup>20</sup> <https://bn.eturbonews.com/buddhas-birthday-in-seoul-1200-year-old-lantern-festival/> (last accessed on 07 October 2022)

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.koreatravelpost.com/seoul-lantern-festival/> (last accessed on 07 October 2022)

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.korea.net/AboutKorea/Tourism/Major-Local-Festivals-in-Korea> (last accessed on 07 October 2022)

## Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory

Different countries differ greatly in level of economic development, political structure, culture, historical experience, natural and climatic conditions, etc. How do these facts affect the characteristics of the organization's culture and the behavior of people? Hart Hofstede's famous typology of organizational culture makes it possible to evaluate different national cultures in terms of parameters such as individualism and collectivism, power distance, masculinity and femininity, perception of uncertainty, etc.

Many business organizations operate in different countries of the world, which are very different from each other in terms of economic development, political structure, culture, historical experience, natural and climatic conditions, etc. It stimulates the search for answers to the question of how these facts are reflected in the characteristics of the organization's culture and, consequently, in human behavior.<sup>23</sup>



G. Hofstede in his research explored in identifying around six characteristic models which is to measure a culture in cross-country society as well. At the same time regarding the cultural dimension represents which has been considered an independent preference for one of the above circumstances in other countries that distinguish countries from one another as a whole.<sup>24</sup> Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory, developed by Geert Hofstede, is a framework used to understand the differences between cultures across different countries and in different ways in which business is done.<sup>25</sup>

## Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper has provided a comprehensive analysis and comparison of the national cultures of Bangladesh and South Korea. Through the application of Hofstede's cultural dimensions model, the study has identified significant differences in the two cultures, particularly in terms of power distance, individualism, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, and long-term orientation. These differences are shaped by various factors such as history, religion, language, education, and political systems. Despite these differences, the paper also notes some similarities between the two cultures, such as a high context communication style and a strong emphasis on family and social hierarchy. Understanding these cultural differences and similarities is critical for effective communication, collaboration, and business relations between Bangladesh and South Korea. The findings of this study provide insights for individuals and organizations operating in these two countries and highlight the importance of cross-cultural competence in a globalized world.

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<sup>24</sup> <https://hi.hofstede-insights.com/national-culture> (last accessed on 07 October 2022)

<sup>25</sup> [https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR\\_66.htm](https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR_66.htm) (last accessed on 07 October 2022)

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